Hood to get Kennedy documents

Assassination expert to donate collection

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FREDERICK, Md. — Harold Weisberg, a noted expert on the assassination of John F. Kennedy, has agreed to donate his papers to Hood College.

Weisberg, 79, has amassed about 250,000 pages of documents on the subject, according to Gerald McKnight, a history professor at Hood.

Weisberg

McKnight, who teaches a course on the assassination, said Monday Weisberg's collection is the biggest held privately in the world.

"This is an archive, really," he said. "It's in very good shape."

Hood spokeswoman Margaret Hindman said the college will make computer reproductions of the documents so scholars can use them without handling them.

Weisberg, who had open heart surgery in 1989 and is in poor health, said Hood was his first choice because he likes the school and McKnight.

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Hood

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"My concern was that they be made available without restrictions to everybody," he said, a condition Hood accepted.

Weisberg, who has battled the federal bureaucracy for three decades, said he never considered donating the papers to a government library or museum.

Weisberg, a former newspaper reporter and U.S. Senate investigator, was raising chickens on his Hyattstown farm when Kennedy was killed Nov. 22, 1963.

It touched off a nearly 30-year odyssey through bureaucratic red tape and untold Freedom of Information Act requests for documents.

"He knows more about the assassination of John F. Kennedy than any living American," McKnight said. "This is an incredible testament to one man's perseverance."

The collection is housed in about 70 file cabinets at Weisberg's Frederick home — most of them in his basement.

Weisberg has a smaller collection on the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., which Hood also will get.

Weisberg doesn't believe Lee Harvey Oswald killed Kennedy and says the government investigation was a whitewash.

He has trouble managing the basement stairs, but is writing another book on Kennedy's autopsy and still gets requests for interviews from television shows, newspapers and scholars.

Weisberg said he was the first person to criticize Oliver Stone's recent movie "JFK," which suggests the assassination was an elaborate government conspiracy.

McKnight said he read one of Weisberg's books while he was doing graduate work at Pennsylvania State University.